

will continue to work for family farmers and spotlight those farmers' contributions to agriculture and what agriculture does for society as a whole. As an Iowan, that is part of Mr. Vilsack's very nature.

I urge my colleagues to confirm Secretary Vilsack once again so that the Department of Agriculture has the necessary leadership in place to continue the important work, and that is, supporting those who feed and fuel the country and, indirectly, a lot of people around the world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote on Linda Thomas-Greenfield's nomination to be Ambassador to the United Nations. I will oppose her nomination.

The United Nations is a troubled institution. Too often, the U.N. is, at its best, a feckless debating society, but at worst—and that is more common, sadly—an apologist for tyranny, corruption, and hypocrisy.

Our Ambassador must give voice to our interests, priorities, and the conscience of the United States and regularly confront our enemies on the world stage. This position requires foresight, judgment, and courage, the courage to speak truth in a den of liars.

Unfortunately, Ms. Thomas-Greenfield hasn't demonstrated these qualities when it comes to the world's most notorious liar: Communist China.

Little more than a year ago, Ms. Thomas-Greenfield delivered a speech at a China-funded Confucius Institute at Savannah State University. In her remarks, she could have condemned China's economic regression, denounced China for flooding our streets with deadly drugs like fentanyl, objected to their ethnic cleansing of Uighurs and Tibetans, called for Beijing to uphold its international commitments to Hong Kong's autonomy, or criticized their predatory lending practices in Africa.

Instead, she praised China. She excused their behavior in Africa and said there is much the United States can learn from China. It is beyond me how anyone, especially a seasoned diplomat, could utter such a grotesque line. America has nothing to learn from a genocidal, Communist tyranny.

She excused China's debt-trap diplomacy and said she could "see no reason" why China couldn't help spread values that included "good governance, gender equity, and the rule of law." Gender equity? Would that include China's barbaric one-child policy, which

led to the elimination of millions of unborn girls over decades of sex-selective abortion or China's policy of systematic rape of religious and ethnic minority women in Xinjiang Province? Gender equity, indeed.

She showed a similar lack of tact and understanding on the subject of trade with China. She asserted that the United States and China should simply "come to an understanding" without uttering a sentence, not a word, not even a syllable of criticism of China's unrestricted and illegal economic aggression against our workers and our companies.

She also asserted that "we are not in a [new] Cold War" with China. This statement, along with the rest of her speech, shows a strategic blindness that is disqualifying for a senior foreign policy post.

Ms. Thomas-Greenfield has expressed regret for her speech, and some people say a single speech shouldn't define an entire career, but this isn't some ancient speech dug up from a long-lost era by political opponents. She gave it just 16 months ago. The whole world knew—and certainly a career diplomat would have known—about China's long, dark, lamentable catalog of crimes against America, international order and stability, and its own people.

And these remarks were not isolated mistakes or a slip of the tongue. This nominee has spent years minimizing the threat of China's actions in Africa and has spoken repeatedly in favor—in favor of China's Belt and Road Initiative, which is a transparent ploy to spread Communist Chinese influence into other countries.

And the Biden administration's attempts to excuse this speech have done her no favors. After her speech came to light, President Biden's transition team stated that Ms. Thomas-Greenfield was "repulsed" by what she saw at the Confucius Institute. Really? Repulsed? If that were true, why didn't she speak out then? Why did she keep the money from the speech?

Either President Biden's team is misleading the public or this nominee failed to speak up when it mattered most on another occasion. Neither possibility reflects favorably on the administration or the nominee.

To be honest, I doubt that Ms. Thomas-Greenfield or the administration are particularly "repulsed" by Confucius Institutes. That is why, after all, in his first week in office, President Biden withdrew a rule that would force universities to disclose their secret agreements with Confucius Institutes.

This was an unnecessary, undeserved, and unwise gift to China, as well as a payoff to higher education, a client and a patron of the Democratic Party. Many colleges have become addicted to Chinese Communist money, and the Biden administration isn't about to shut off that gravy train. After all, Joe Biden's son Hunter takes Chinese money, so how could he object to liberal universities taking Chinese money?

I will conclude by saying that in the last month, we have witnessed a gradual erosion of America's resolve in confronting China. This nomination is just another signal of weakness to Beijing. Supporters of Ms. Thomas-Greenfield's nomination can pretend that this dove has talons, but any fairminded observer, and especially those in Beijing, know that is not true. I will oppose the nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to support the nomination of Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield as U.S. Representative to the United Nations, the Security Council, and the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's impressive career in public service makes her uniquely and eminently qualified for this role. For over 35 years, she has served this country faithfully and ably, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, in senior Senate-confirmed positions such as Ambassador to Liberia, Director General of the Foreign Service, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield understands at her core that foreign policy is about forging connections and building relationships. So I have no doubt that what she calls her personal brand of "gumbo diplomacy," which emphasizes connecting with others to solve problems, will be of tremendous service to the United States at an institution like the United Nations, where personal relationships matter a great deal.

Our country is truly fortunate that the Ambassador has agreed to return to public service, especially at this critical moment. We face an array of formidable challenges, both around the world and at the U.N., that demand someone with her skills and commitment to democracy, good governance, human rights, and anti-corruption.

Over the last 4 years, the United States has accrued more than \$1 billion in peacekeeping arrears, tried to pull out of the World Health Organization in the middle of a pandemic, undermined international protections for women, girls, and LGBTI individuals, defunded or cut funding to key agencies like the U.N. Population Fund and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and pulled out of the Paris climate agreement.

Meanwhile, China and other authoritarian countries have filled the vacuum left by our absence. We must regain U.S. leverage and influence at the Security Council, where Russia and China

have used their veto powers and ability to bully nonpermanent members to stymie the Council's work.

They have shielded abusive regimes, like the criminal dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, and the government of Burma, which committed genocide against the Rohingya.

Our loss of influence at the Security Council under the Trump administration was on full display in the disastrous attempt to extend the U.N. arms embargo on Iran, where the United States could muster only one other vote of support on the Council—one other vote—including some of our most longtime allies: Germany, France, Great Britain, to mention a few. It was an embarrassment, an embarrassment.

Meanwhile, China has increased its role and activities at the United Nations and in other international organizations and has worked to pervert and distort the core values that make the U.N.'s work so important, especially the U.N.'s long-held commitment to human rights.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has a long history of expressed opposition to China's use of debt-trap tactics and its increasingly malign presence in world governance bodies.

She has spoken plainly about China's authoritarian ambitions, its open hostility to universal human rights and democratic values, and has committed to confronting them every step of the way at the United Nations.

What the United States desperately needs right now at the U.N. is renewal and reengagement with key alliances and institutions. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has the expertise, the strength, and the character to deliver on these priorities, to stand up for the challenges that we face from China, to regain U.S. leverage and influence in the Security Council, to reengage our allies and hold Iran accountable, and to stand firm when Israel is subject to biased attacks.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has my full support, and I urge my colleagues to support the nomination.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the vote be held immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on Cal-

endar No. 10, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, of Louisiana, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Chris Van Hollen, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Bernard Sanders, Edward J. Markey, Cory A. Booker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Linda Thomas-Greenfield, of Louisiana, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 60 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Baldwin	Hassan	Portman
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blunt	Hirono	Romney
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Boozman	Inhofe	Rounds
Brown	Johnson	Sanders
Burr	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Collins	Lujan	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Thune
Cornyn	Markey	Tillis
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Van Hollen
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fischer	Ossoff	Wicker
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Graham	Peters	Young

NAYS—20

Barrasso	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hagerty	Sasse
Cotton	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lankford	Shelby
Daines	Lummis	Tuberville
Ernst	Marshall	

NOT VOTING—5

Blackburn	Murray	Toomey
Moran	Paul	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 75, and the nays are 20.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the conclusion of morning business on Tuesday, February 23, the Senate resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 10, Linda Thomas-Greenfield; that at 11:30 a.m., all postcloture time on the Thomas-Greenfield nomination be considered expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, at 2:15 p.m., the Senate resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 7, Thomas Vilsack, with 20 minutes for debate, as provided under the previous order; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Vilsack nomination; and that upon disposition of the Vilsack nomination and if cloture has been invoked on Calendar No. 11, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Thomas-Greenfield nomination; finally, that if any of the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE GILMORE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for nearly 50 years, Steve Gilmore has been making his mark on the city of Ashland. As an educator, a parks commissioner, and finally as a mayor, his contributions to northeastern Kentucky have shaped a legacy anyone could be proud of. Today, I would like to recognize this incredible public servant and wish him well as he begins a richly deserved retirement.

Steve got his start in public service at 29 as a member of the local parks board. In the following years, he led the renewal of Ashland's public spaces, pushed for the repainting of its iconic bridges, and helped champion a major renovation of the riverfront. In 1978,